



Supporting Self Advocacy

All of the information presented in the previous sections is focused on helping people with developmental disabilities become more involved in the decisions which affect their lives. While we can advocate for others through the best of intentions in a individual-oriented service system, the most important method of advocacy is self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is people speaking up for their own rights in their own individual ways.

What is self advocacy?

I am IMPORTANT

I KNOW what I want

I will WORK HARD to get what I want

I am RESPONSIBLE for the choices I make*

This is part of a pledge from a self-advocacy group. A self advocacy group is a group of people with disabilities who get together to help each other figure out ways to live the lives they want. This pledge helps people speak up and do the things that are important in their lives.

*Adapted from a pledge of the Santa Barbara Council
for Self Advocacy

Supporting self advocacy through daily activities

We can support people to advocate for themselves through daily lifestyle activities. Training and experience in making choices and decision making can be supported in many ways, depending on the needs and skills of individuals. The desired outcome of all of these activities is to honor individual lifestyle preferences and to support more independence.

Here are some examples:

- **Timing of events** Choosing when to get up or when to go to bed at night or when to get a haircut or when to eat dinner.
- **Personal choices** What clothes to wear, what shampoo to buy, which cereal to eat.
- **Methods of training** Choosing between places where learning will occur or who will provide the support.
- **Staff evaluation** Through interviews with individuals who are supported by staff or through observations of staff relationships with individuals.
- **Hiring of staff** Asking individuals to serve on hiring committees.
- **Agency board of directors** Supporting an individual to serve on the board of an agency that provides services or advocacy to people with developmental disabilities.
- **Self advocacy training.** Joining a local People First chapter.
- **Annual planning meetings.** Making sure that individuals with developmental disabilities are present and allowing for time and support to make sure that people understand what is happening.

Supporting the right to vote

Who can vote?

To vote, you must be:

- at least a certain number of years old (usually 18) by the day of the next election in your area;
- a citizen of the United States;
- a resident of your state;
- not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction;
- not declared by a court to be unable to vote; and
- registered (signed up) to vote.

Some people think they cannot vote if they have a conservator. This is often wrong! A court would have to say if you cannot vote. It does not matter if you cannot read or write English or any other language. If you can answer “yes” to those things listed above, you have the right to vote!

How do I sign up or register to vote?

To be able to vote, you have to register or sign up. To register to vote, you need to fill out a card that has a few questions. You will need to write down or have someone help you write down your name, address, birthdate, the state or foreign country where you were born. You need to sign the form.

There is no cost to register to vote. There are many places you can go to register to vote; call and ask someone in your area. Also, you need to register again if you have moved or changed your name since the last election.

Why vote?

When you vote, you are letting your elected representatives know what is important to you and whether or not you think they are doing a good job. The time when you can vote is called an election. Elections are held at least every two years, and sometimes more often.

Excerpts from

More Than a Meeting:

A Pocket Guide to the Person-Centered Individual Program Plan

Developed by Allen, Shea & Associates for the California Department of Developmental Services

Listen to Me

Developed by USARC/PACE and Allen, Shea & Associates in collaboration with
Michael Smull, Steve Sweet, Claudia Bolton and Pam Lopez Greene

A Game Plan for You

Developed by Allen, Shea & Associates for Harbor Regional Center

Reference to

PATHS by Marsha Forrest, Jack Pearpoint and John O'Brien (Inclusion Press)

The Place of My Own Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Towards Maximum Independence, San Diego

Accessible House or Apartment Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Towards Maximum Independence, San Diego

Staff Feedback Form

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Becoming Independent, Santa Rosa, CA

IPP Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Becoming Independent, Santa Rosa, CA

Looking at My Own Life Quality

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by
Partners in Consulting, Sacramento, CA

The Law Made Easy

From A Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act California Department of Developmental Services

What is Self-Advocacy?

From A Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act California Department of Developmental Services

Supporting the Right to Vote

Excerpts from *Get Involved!*

Developed by the Area 4 Board on Developmental Disabilities

References

Allen, B., Biggs, M., Sanford, J., Scavarda, M., & Scott, P. (1987). *Quality indicators in supported employment programs: a review system*. Santa Rosa: Quality Assurance Committee.

Bellamy, G.T., & Wilcox, B. (1981). *From school to what? Transition services for students with severe handicaps*. Eugene: University of Oregon.

California State Department of Education (1982). *Individualized critical skills model*. Sacramento: Department of Education.

California State Department of Rehabilitation (1985). *OSERS California project*.

Galloway, C. & O'Brien, J. (1981). *Mapping vocational service accomplishments*. Paper presentation.

Horton, B., Maddox, M., Edgar, E. (1984). *Adult transition model: Planning for postschool services*. Seattle: Edmark.

Kieman, W.E. & Stark, J.A. (1986). *Pathways to employment for adults with developmental disabilities*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes.

Lakin, K.C. & Bruininks, R.H. ,Eds (1985). *Strategies for achieving community integration of developmentally disabled citizens*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes.

North Bay Regional Center (1987). *Sonoma county transitions project: cooperative models for planning and developing transitional services, final report*. Napa: NBRC

O'Brien. J. in Wilcox, B. & Bellamy, G.T. (1987). *A comprehensive guide to the activities catalogue: an alternative curriculum for youth and adults with severe disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Parham, J.D., Rude, C, & Bemanke, P. (1977). *Individual program planning with developmentally disabled persons*. Lubbock: Research & Training Center in Mental Retardation.

Residential Quality Assurance Committee (1986). *What I would want to know about a residential program*. Napa: Area IV Board.

Wilcox, B. (1982) Forum: Mastering prerequisite skills: the 'readiness' logic. *TASH Newsletter*, 8(7), July.

Preparation of this publication was financed in part by grant number G0001MNBS24 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities under provisions of Public Law 106-402. Content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

For additional free copies, please contact

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
Department of Administration
370 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

Call: 651.296.4018
TTY: 651.296.9962
Fax: 651.297.7200
Toll Free: 877.348.0505
e-mail: admin.dd@state.mn.us

websites: www.mncdd.org
www.mnddc.org
www.partnersinpolicymaking.com